

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON COUNTY SERVICE AUTHORITY
REQUEST FOR SECTION 26a APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT AN INTAKE IN
SOUTH HOLSTON RESERVOIR (TRACT NO. SH 737F)
SOUTH FORK HOLSTON RIVER MILE 72.5R NEAR THE CONFLUENCE OF
THE MIDDLE FORK HOLSTON RIVER

WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Purpose and Need

The Washington County Service Authority (WCSA) proposes to construct a new 12 million gallon per day (MGD) raw water intake and pump station (intake structure) at South Fork Holston River Mile (SFHRM) 72.5 (right bank), about 150 feet upstream of the confluence of the Middle Fork Holston River (MFHR), in southwest Virginia. The project would affect land owned by the WCSA over which TVA retains the right to flood (Tract No. SH 737F). The purpose of the proposed intake is to provide increased withdrawal capacity for the Washington County Water Treatment Plant in order to meet future municipal water supply demands. Construction of the intake structure in the river and access bridge in the floodplain of South Fork Holston River (SFHR) would constitute permanent obstructions; therefore, approval under Section 26a of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Act is required. TVA has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project that is incorporated by reference.

Alternatives

The attached EA considers three alternatives: (1) No Action, (2) the Proposed Action, and (3) the Proposed Action with Mitigation. As indicated in the EA, WCSA plans for the needed intake have evolved since the early 1990s. Various sources and alternative locations of intakes to satisfy Washington County's water supply needs were considered over these years. This includes a dual or split system with a new intake and increased withdrawal capacity at its existing water treatment plant at MFHR Mile 5.0.

Alternative 3 is TVA's preferred alternative because it minimizes impacts on a known archaeological site (44Wg560), while fulfilling the WCSA purpose and need for the project. Anticipated future increases in per capita use, both residential and business, would be met under this alternative. WCSA has indicated that the new SFHR intake and resultant stable reliable water supply are essential for the future health, welfare, and prosperity of residents, businesses, and visitors to the Washington County area. WCSA determined that alternative sites for the intake are not economically or logistically feasible (see the Alternatives and Comparison Section in the attached EA).

Anticipated Impacts

The proposed action would have little to no effect on natural features or sensitive environmental resources, including wetlands or endangered or threatened species. While the proposed intake would be within the 100-year floodplain, WCSA and TVA have determined that there is no practicable alternative to this location. TVA has determined that the intake structure is a repetitive action that would result in minor floodplain impacts, and the action complies with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management). Under Alternative 3, the preferred alternative, anticipated impacts on local flooding and floodplain values would be insignificant.

Under normal flow conditions, water quantity impacts would likely be minimal, and no reductions in the assimilative capacity or impacts on aquatic ecosystem functions would be expected. However, because the intake design differs from the standard recommended, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries would require WCSA to monitor the operational impacts of the proposed design on aquatic life in the SFHR.

TVA, in consultation with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), has determined that construction and operation of the intake would have an adverse effect on archaeological site 44Wg560 which is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Because the project would adversely impact historic properties, a final Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was executed among TVA, the VA SHPO, and WCSA, and signed on November 15, 2006, with stipulations to address and satisfy the federal permitting agency's responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (see Attachment 1 in the attached EA). If impacts to archaeological site 44Wg560 cannot be avoided, mitigation for loss of this site would include development of a data recovery plan, as described in the MOA. WCSA would be responsible for and provide all funds necessary for project implementation. TVA, together with other signatories to the MOA, would ensure that the stipulations of the MOA are implemented such that the effects of the intake construction on archaeological resources are minimized.

The project would also have a minor visual effect on the nearby Norfolk & Western Railroad Bridge, locally known as Creeper Trestle. The Creeper Trail, of which the trestle is a part, has been previously determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The VA SHPO concurred with TVA's determination that, with mitigation, the project would have no adverse effect to historic properties.

Public Review

The proposed action was the subject of a joint public notice issued in 2002 by TVA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and regulatory agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The proposal was subsequently modified in response to comments on this public notice. The proposal was also the subject of a public notice printed in an area newspaper by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Permit Conditions and Mitigation

An MOA, signed on November 15, 2006, stipulates how the recovery of archeological data from site 44Wg560 will be carried out. Also, as required by the VDHR and included in the MOA, WCSA will use appropriate material and colors as well as vegetative screening to avoid or reduce effects of the intake structure on the nearby Creeper Trail (and trestle). WCSA will comply with all stipulations in this MOA.

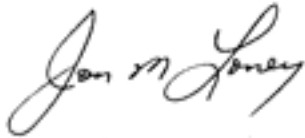
WCSA will design the project to meet the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program and all local floodplain ordinances. As stated in the VWP permit, WCSA will monitor the operational impacts of the intake on aquatic life in the SFHR. WCSA will also implement best management practices and other measures included in its Virginia Marine Resources Commission and USACE permits as well as comply with standard and general conditions of its TVA Section 26a permit. In addition, WCSA will follow procedures included in the *Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook* (3rd Edition 1992) throughout intake project construction to minimize impacts on water quality and aquatic life in SFHR.

The TVA Section 26a approval will include provisions that require WCSA to adhere to special conditions and requirements, including a limitation on the maximum peak daily withdrawal rate (12 MGD), a requirement to report annual water usage, and a prohibition against sale or transfer

of water from this source outside the existing utility service territory. The Section 26a permit will expire at the end of 15 years from the date of its issuance.

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the attached EA, the analysis included within it and the mitigation measures stipulated in the MOA and the May 2, 2006, VDHR letter, TVA concludes that approval of this intake construction and operation proposal would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date Signed

Washington County (VA) Service Authority Final FONSI